SEP 3 1959

DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

Vol. VIII NO. 16 July 31st 1959 Price: 15 Pf, 5c., 3d.

WHY ALL THIS TALK?

By the Editor

Question One: Why is the Geneva Foreign Ministers' Conference lasting so long?

It would have been fine for everybody if the foreign ministers could just have gone to Geneva, sat down round a table, and solved the German problem amicably in three or four days. But the German problem has been haunting Europe for generations, and has become increasingly difficult to solve in the years since the end of World War Two. It is a difficult problem, and its solution would take a long time in any case. The position has been further complicated by the attitude of the West German Government, which has flung a spanner in the works every time the other foreign ministers look like making progress.

Question Two: If the German problem is so difficult to solve, why not leave things just a they are?

Let us leave aside the fact that the German people do not like living in a divided state, with big foreign armies stationed on their soil. You may think that Germany has been a nuisance for so long that now the Germans should be left to stew in their own juice.

But this is the crux of the problem. If steps are not taken to solve the problem, it will not just be the Germans who suffer. You, every single one of you reading these words will find yourselves in the stew-pot too, and in a stew-pot boiling on an atomic stove.

The simple but appalling facts must not be overlooked: the West German Wehrmacht is today already three times as large as the old Wehrmacht was when Hitler took over: in a very few months, unless you help to stop it happening, this new Wehrmacht will be armed with atomic weapons. And never forget that the West German Wehrmacht is exclusively commanded by the men who commanded Hitler's Wehrmacht; that key posts in the state, in industry, and elsewhere are held in West Germany by the men who ran Hitler's Germany; and that officials of the West German Government repeatedly call for the grabbing of large parts of Poland and Czechoslovakia, just as Hitler did.

So things simply cannot be left "just as they are".

Question Three: What are the basic differences between the two sides at the conference?

The western powers say: let us work out a solution of the German problem between the great powers, and impose it upon the Germans. The Soviet Union, strongly supported by the German Democratic Republic, says: the Big Four are competent to deal with the security problem, but the Germans themselves, the two existing German states, must be the people to work out all the other problems. This is the basic point of difference.

Sooner or later, direct negotiations between the two German states are going to come, and when this is finally agreed a big step will have been taken towards the solution of the German problem. Let us all do what we can to make it sooner, rather than later.

BRENTANO'S FOLLY - A Farce in three Acts

ACT 1: (The date is July 11th. Enter West German Foreign Minister Heinrich von Brentano.)

BRENTANO: "I am asked why we do not discuss things with the German Democratic Republic. I must reply that I would be glad to talk with the 17 million people there, but not with their rulers. Let me speak to the people of Dresden – I would be able to find contact with them."

ACT 2: (The date is July 12th. Enter Democratic Germany's Foreign Minister Lothar Bolz.)

BOLZ: "I should be glad to invite Herr Brentano to Dresden. He could speak in any factory or on any square which he would like to select. He would be able to find out what people in Democratic Germany think about the problems being discussed in Geneva: but he would have to answer questions about affairs in West Germany too."

ACT 3: (The date is July 13th. The place is the press conference of the West German delegation in Geneva.)

JOURNALIST: "When will Herr Brentano visit Dresden?"

WEST GERMAN SPOKESMAN No. ONE: "I don't know. He didn't tell me." **(Laughter)**

WEST GERMAN SPOKESMAN No. TWO: "The invitation was made in a propagandistic form."

JOURNALIST: "What form should the invitation have taken?"

SPOKESMAN No. TWO: "Free elections would have to take place first."

SPOKESMAN No. ONE: "Herr Brentano would have to be given the chance to choose the audience himself."

JOURNALIST: "That is just what Foreign Minister Bolz suggested. He said Brentano could choose his own audience."

SPOKESMAN No. ONE: "Well, the whole thing is not very urgent, anyway."

(Curtain)

GENEVA CONFERENCE DIARY

July 13th: *Conference re-assembles after three-week pause. Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko repeats his proposal for an interim agreement on West Berlin during a limited period in which an All-German Committee should work out details of contacts between the two German states and prepare for a peace treaty. He suggests 18 month period.*

July 15th: *French Foreign Minister states: "We have reached a point where neither side knows what the other is talking about." All three western foreign ministers argue that there is no link between the Berlin question and the question of an All-German committee.*

July 16th: *American Foreign Minister Christian Herter suggests that UN might supervise "subversive activities" throughout Berlin, and that any interim solution on Berlin should last until German reunification. Dr Lothar Bolz, Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, stresses the readiness of Democratic Germany for constructive talks in an All-German Commission.*

July 20th: *American Foreign Minister Herter proposes that "the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers, as at present constituted, shall continue in being for the purpose of considering the German problem as a whole." Democratic Germany's Foreign Minister Bolz states that German reunification must be a matter for the two German states to settle. (Main points from Dr Bolz's speech are given below).*

July 22nd: *Soviet Foreign Minister gives an unconditional undertaking that the Soviet Union will take no unilateral action during the period of any interim agreement on West Berlin.*

July 23rd: *British Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd expresses satisfaction at the Soviet statement barring unilateral action. "I believe that it should be possible here or at another level to get final acceptance of this interim agreement", Selwyn Lloyd said.*

Points from Dr Bolz's Statement

Here are some of the main points from the speech delivered at the Geneva Conference on July 20th by Dr Lothar Bolz, Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic:

The most urgent task facing our people today is the conclusion of a peace treaty. If the four powers wish to establish a commission to work out their standpoint with regard to a peace treaty with Germany, this must be welcomed... But it is just as necessary, in fact imperative, to establish an All-German Commission, or some other organ of the German states, which can work out a joint German point of view on the peace treaty.

Other forms would naturally be conceivable; for instance one can envisage a commission composed of all the six states participating in this conference, after the four-state commission has worked out the proposals of the four powers, and the two-state commission has worked out the proposals of the two German states... In this case, a commission composed of representatives of all six states could do fruitful work. If one is optimistic enough to believe that the different points of view could be rapidly brought nearer to each other it is possible to envisage that such a six-state commission could be formed even earlier.

But in any case there are two conditions: the completely equal status of all six partners, and the condition that this commission should deal solely with the preparation of a peace treaty.

The work of any sort of commission, four-state commission, All-German commission, six-state commission would in any case have to be subject to some sort of time limit. The reasons are as follows:

1. Fifteen years after the end of the war the German people have the right to know how soon the commission will produce results.

2. West German militarism must not be given unlimited time for further re-armament, cloaked by commission sessions of unlimited duration.

3. The interests of other nations are involved. Poland, for instance, has the right to know how soon a peace treaty will be concluded which will bring to an end the revenge propaganda directed against Poland from West Germany.

The spokesman of the three western powers have stressed that the continuation of this conference in permanence must lead to the treatment of the question of German reunification round this table. I must stress most forcibly and earnestly that the reunification of Germany can never come from outside, and can certainly not be imposed from outside. It can only be achieved from inside, by the German people themselves...

Jailed Under Hitler — Jailed Under Adenauer

The West German Supreme Court passed jail sentences of up to two years on six members of the banned West German Communist Party on July 16th. They were found guilty of distributing illegal Communist pamphlets and newspapers. Five of the six men served long prison terms in nazi Germany for the same offence.

Here are the records of the accused: Sebastian Steer spent ten years in nazi prisons and concentration camps. Heinrich Bell was confined in a nazi concentration camp from 1934 to 1937; he then made his way to Spain to fight in the International Brigade; from 1941 to 1945 he was held in Dachau concentration camp. Ludwig Heigl spent nearly four years in concentration camp, and Josef Aumueller nearly two years. The youngest of the accused, Ernst Grube, aged 27, whose mother was Jewish, was sent to a concentration camp for Jews at the age of eight and held for five years until liberation at the end of the war.

Refugee Camps Expanded in Democratic Germany

Democratic Germany has recently doubled the capacity of the camps and hostels for refugees from West Germany, it was announced in Berlin. West Germans are now arriving in the German Democratic Republic in a steady stream: in the first half of July 3740 people arrived, an increase of about 10 % over the average for the preceding six months. So far this year about 45,000 West Germans have found new homes in the German Democratic Republic, according to official figures. Almost one quarter of them are young men of call-up age.

Migrants from West Germany spend about ten days in reception camps while jobs and homes are found for them. They immediately become eligible for all benefits of the health service, and they can apply for low-interest loans of up to 3000 marks (over £ 250) to help them get settled in their new homes.

Agreement with BEA

Lufthansa, the airline of the German Democratic Republic, has concluded an inter-line traffic agreement with British European Airways, it was announced in Berlin on July 20th. Similar agreements on cooperation in international air traffic have recently been concluded with Syrian Airways and Trans Canada Airlines.

HEUSINGER A STOOL-PIGEON?

General Adolf Heusinger, Hitler's Chief of Operations, who today commands the West German Wehrmacht, betrayed to the Gestapo details of the anti-Hitler bomb plot of July 20th 1944. This is the charge made by a new documentary film produced by DEFA, the film company of the German Democratic Republic.

Here is the background to the story. In 1943 and the early part of 1944, when it was obvious to any realist that Hitler had lost the war, certain circles in the high ranks of the Wehrmacht decided to get rid of Hitler. The majority of the anti-Hitler plotters cannot be described as anti-fascist resistance fighters, but if their plot had been successful the war would almost certainly have been shortened by many months, and hundreds of thousands of lives would have been saved.

On July 20th 1944 a bomb finally exploded in Hitler's headquarters, but Hitler was only wounded. The Gestapo immediately rounded up every officer who could conceivably have been implicated, and they were all shot or hanged, with the exception of Heusinger.

The new DEFA film, entitled "The Heusinger Case", uses nazi documents and film material to support the charge that Heusinger played the role of stool pigeon or informer.

The most impressive sequence of the film shows extracts from a secret nazi sound-film record of the proceedings of the People's Court in Berlin, presided over by Judge Roland Freisler. On August 7th 1944 Major General Helmut Stieff, one of the plotters, was examined by the court. Here is an extract from the cross-examination.

Freisler: "Is it correct that you visited Colonel von Treskow in Summer 1943?"

Stieff: "Yes."

Freisler: "You discussed with him that the war must be ended, and that the Fuehrer must be done away with?"

Stieff: "Yes."

Freisler: "Did you immediately report this to your superior officers?"

Stieff: "I spoke about this conversation with General Heusinger, Deputy Chief of General Staff."

All other officers thus named as having known of the plot were executed: Heusinger alone escaped. The film suggests that Heusinger purchased his life by giving full details to Hitler, and supports this charge by an extract from Heusinger's own book "Befehl im Widerstreit" published a few years ago in West Germany. In this book Heusinger recalls that after the bomb plot he drew up a special memorandum, which was forwarded to Hitler, and records that when he visited Hitler at his headquarters at the end of September 1944 Hitler said: "I have studied your memorandum, and thank you for it."

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Commenting on the new DEFA film, the West German newsmagazine "Spiegel" stated on May 27th: "The question remains open as to how General Heusinger managed to survive, although Stieff named him to the police and the People's Court as an accomplice. For this purpose the Bonn General needs the help of a former Gestapo official, and this man is making frantic efforts to avoid appearing in public to clear Heusinger's name."

Footnote: Heusinger's role in connection with the anti-Hitler bomb plot was, to say the very least, ambiguous. Despite this, Heusinger, in his capacity of Inspector General of the West German Wehrmacht, issued an order of the day to his Wehrmacht on July 20th this year blandly stating: "The deed of July 20th 1944 is a shining light in Germany's darkest times ... Those men (the anti-Hitler officers) are the leading witnesses against the collective guilt of the German people."

Our picture shows just a small selection of the militarist newspapers and magazines published in West Germany.

The papers shown are:

1. **"Der Luftwaffenring"** – The Luftwaffe Association – organ of the former members of the nazi Luftwaffe and anti-aircraft troops.

2. **"Soldat im Volk"** – Soldier in the People – organ of the Association of German Soldiers. Subtitle of the paper is "For Tradition and Progress – Honour and Justice – Liberty and Comradeship". The main headline states "Retire, Herr Niemoeller!".

3. **"Der Deutsche Soldat"** – The German Soldier – and incorporates the former magazine "The Front-Line Soldier". Title picture of the issue shown depicts West German Chancellor Adenauer and War Minister Franz Josef Strauss in conversation with former Wehrmacht officers now serving in the West Germany Army.

4. **"Der Stahlhelm"** – The Steel Helmet – organ of the Steelhelmets, League of Front-Line Soldiers. In 1933 the Steelhelmet organisation was incorporated in toto in Hitler's storm troops.

5. **"Wehrkunde"** – Military Science – organ of the West German Society for Military Science.

Peep Behind the Propaganda

By Heinz Kraschutzki

(Heinz Kraschutzki, author of this article reprinted from "Peace News", London, of June 26th, is a veteran German pacifist now living in West Berlin.)

What is the real situation in East Germany? The fact is: I know only a little, but that is a good deal more than those who are busy with cold-war propaganda.

If they were right 99 per cent of the East German people would have no other desire than to be "liberated" as soon as possible by the West and to be integrated into the Bonn republic under Dr. Konrad Adenauer. This is not so . . .

The food situation has improved considerably; there is no hunger any longer and complaints in this respect are only that the variety of things one can buy is not yet as wide as in the West.

Let us ignore the propaganda and look at the facts.

Last August the Bonn Government suggested that there was a "tremendous increase" in refugees from the East. But the Ministry for Refugees, Bonn, had to admit the facts. While in August, 1957, there had been 26,000, in August, 1958, there were only 21,000. Not a "tremendous increase"! But such statistics never consider those who are going West-East. They were given (by the East Germans) to be about 6,000 per month, so that the real surplus of refugees East-West over those West-East was only 15,000.

Meanwhile we have had months with not more than 10,000 migrants East-West, while the number of such West-East has remained at about 6,000 per month. This would mean that the surplus is only 4,000 now — a rather insignificant number.

One has to consider that these are not all real refugees. In a country where families are split up, it often happens they try to come together. Only 3 per cent of those going East-West are officially registered as "political refugees". Most of the others go West because wages are a little higher and life more comfortable. I don't blame them for that, but they do not fit cold-war propaganda.

The East insists that recently the number of young people going West-East has increased considerably, owing in part to the fact that there is conscription in West Germany and not in the East, in part because many miners are now without jobs in the Ruhr district. There are no jobless in East Germany.

The desire for unification of the country is probably stronger in the East than in the West. But many people don't want unification without certain guarantees. Those who simply want Adenauer to take over are certainly in a minority.

There is the schooling system. Teachers in West Germany have protested strongly for years that the schools are being neglected in the Federal Republic. It is not only that the building of new schools for a growing population is insufficient, but that military barracks are being given preference. Even more important is the fact that, in the East, the parents of every really talented child can be sure that it will be given a chance to receive higher education; parents' income is quite irrelevant, as 90 per cent of the university students get scholarships.

But is not Communist propaganda in the schools of the East dangerous, and considered as such by many parents? I think this is true, though it is often exaggerated in the West.

But the schools in the West are in no way free from propaganda. Quite recently I heard a boy of 16 saying: "And as we all know the Russians would attack us immediately if we had no atomic weapons, I think it is good we have them." He took it absolutely for granted that nobody could doubt Russian aggressiveness. Was that his own reasoning or did it only reflect what he had been told in school?

If there were a better alternative to the Ulbricht regime in the East than the Adenauer regime in the West, things would perhaps look different.

There is little propaganda for militarism in East Germany. There is a sort of military preparation in the form of shooting practice in certain youth organisations. Of course, as there is no conscription, there is propaganda among the young generation to join the army.

But my impression is that people in general — not to speak of Cold War fanatics who certainly exist in the East — really believe their army is a defensive one, as it is greatly inferior to the West German Army in numbers and equipment.

East Germany has accepted officially the actual frontier as definite, while the Bonn government still maintains its claim that the Eastern Provinces should be returned to Germany. (People who know something of the inner situation in Bonn say that the government is fully convinced that the provinces are lost, but maintains the claim for bargaining purposes.)

A friend of mine, a professor, living in East Germany and a member of the Communist Party, said to me: "Don't think it was easy for us to relinquish all hope of recovering those provinces. There are many living among us who consider them their homeland. But we thought we had to do it. It was a sacrifice for the matter of peace, please recognise that! Now, instead, we have good neighbourly relations with Poland. This is also worth something."

It is my full conviction that the overwhelming majority of the East German population supports the taking over of the big estates of the former Junker class, which have been handed over to smallholders (with the exception of some few which are under the management of the State for special purposes).

The best propaganda Herr Ulbricht has against the desire to integrate East Germany with West Germany is the fear of the old Junker landlords coming back. Of course, people in the cities are less interested in this question than the countryfolk. But the disastrous political influence of the Junker class is not yet forgotten.

Adenauer once admitted that over 60 per cent of the higher officers of the Bonn administration had served under Hitler. This is in no way attactive to all those who have suffered under Hitler or who have realised that the Hitler way was wrong and led to disaster. There are very few former Nazis who have risen to higher positions in East Germany. The civil service system is not like the West German — where officers of the administration are appointed for life — but more like that of the USA, i. e., any officer may be dismissed at any time. This makes not only corruption difficult and risky, but also makes it impossible for former Hitlerites to make their influence effective behind the scenes.

If the alternative were, as Western propaganda has it: "Slavery in the East — Freedom in the West", people

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Wedding, Work, Women In a Pants Factory

By Allen Mann

As guest of a friend of mine, a young woman who edits a fortnightly factory newspaper, I recently visited the "Fortschritt" ("Progress") factory in Berlin, which is the largest in the country making men's clothing, specialising in trousers, jackets and suits. The factory, once owned largely by Dutch capital but nationalised after the war, has about 2500 employees, and despite the very masculine line of production, about 85 % of them are girls and women.

Of the 15 % men, some are elderly and others are happily married so that there is understandable competition among the girls for the remainder. Thus there was great excitement recently when not one, or two, but three eligible bachelors decided to marry three girls from the factory. And to make matters worse, one of the three was "Handsome Udo", as he was called, a young man secretly desired by almost all the girls.

Six at a blow. Triple wedding at the Berlin "Progress" factory.

There was another reason for excitement, as my friend the editor told me. Since none of the couples were church members they would not have a church wedding, but they did want a more formal ceremony than the one at the city clerk's office. The result was something called (almost formidably) a "socialist marriage ceremony", which meant only that it would be performed at the factory itself and that representatives of the management and the Socialist Unity Party would speak a few words for the occasion. Since all the brides and bridegrooms worked there, it seemed a good idea to get married at the place where they all had met. The wedding was not to be performed among the sewing machines and conveyor belts, of course; there was a decorative room known as the "Young People's Room" which would just serve.

The great day of the triple wedding finally arrived. With it a whole host of visitors from the city council, the newspapers and even the newsreel, for such a ceremony was new in Berlin, though it had already been tried out in other cities. The work teams of the six were also invited, as were their relatives, of course, and any other friends they chose from inside or outside the factory. That filled the room to bursting; most of the other working girls, undaunted, flocked around outside. As "Handsome Udo" arrived by taxi and started to pay the driver, the girls all called, "Not today, Udo. Let the factory management pay today!" And it did. In fact, it showed itself very generous. There was good wine, an ample breakfast banquet and substantial gifts for the three seamstresses, the two pressers and the youth secretary who were being wed. Speeches were also kept to a short and tasteful minimum and everything went off admirably -- the brides blushed and the bridegrooms looked resplendent in suits which at least one of them had made himself.

There were only two negative notes. One was that hardly any work got done that day at all — but then it was the day before a holiday (Good Friday), so not so much would have been accomplished anyway. The other was noticed only by my friend from the newspaper. Just as "Handsome Udo" was saying "I do", she noticed two poor little disappointed seamstresses weeping quietly but bitterly in one corner.

There has been one other such marriage since then in the factory (only one couple) and the manager, though admittedly somewhat rueful about the expense, assures everyone that factory funds will be stretched

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would certainly choose freedom. But there is less slavery in the East and less freedom in the West than people think. The difference is not fundamental, but a matter of degree. For many a man the alternative is a certain pressure from the Communist side here, a certain pressure from the Nazi side there. Which a man will prefer depends upon his personal taste and sometimes his record.

Nuclear weapons are a very important issue. People have the impression that the Russians want peace and that the West is always using threats. I was present when a man told some American visitors: "I am from Darmstadt. When I visit my parents, we can see the long-range atomic guns set up there, directed towards the East, where I am living. You think my parents and myself like it?" The fact that West Germany is armed to the teeth with modern atomic weapons, while there are no such bases in East Germany, makes West Germany unattractive.

Quite recently I saw a woman in East Berlin, whom I know had always longed to be in the West. But this time she said: "With that sabre-rattling over there, I think it better that I should stay where I am."

for all future marriage pairs who want such a wedding.

After hearing this story in all its details, I was shown around the plant. Women were everywhere and the sewing machines chattered away ceaselessly. We stopped at one machine where a woman was busily occupied sewing buttons on trousers. She had a modern machine for the job, as we saw, but she explained that it still needs experience to find just the right spot for each button. Other women were working on jacket lapels, pockets and all the other parts of men's clothing. All the ironing was relegated to men, for it is hot, heavy work, but it pays very well, I was assured (sometimes averaging up towards 1000 marks (£ 85) a month. The other jobs pay according to the degree of qualification as well as the quantity produced, with a fairly high average considering that it is light industry.

We talked to a young chap of 21 or 22 who recently changed over from a job in a small private tailor shop. He has advanced rapidly here and is now a specialist in tracing the shapes of lapels on the cloth as it comes in. His greatest enthusiasm seemed reserved for the factory's football team, which had made a good showing lately despite the limited number of male reserves.

The factory has recently built a conveyor belt system, which carries little baskets filled with sleeves, collars and linings past the women at the sewing machines, so that it is no longer necessary for them to fetch them themselves or to have people doing transport work and running in and out between the tables.

After looking at production methods, I visited or heard about other features in the "Progress" plant which may sometimes be found in capitalist firms, but which taken together add up to a very different sort of working atmosphere, especially when compared with the way things were here under private ownership.

There are the sport facilities, for example, for badminton, ping-pong, volleyball and gymnastics — the volleyball court was built by the Free German Youth organisation in the plant with financial support from the management. There is also the football team which I have mentioned and a small canoe team (all girls) which practice in other parts of the city. Some of the employees have a little folk-dance group, which is also amply helped with factory funds, but which can never find enough men for partners, and must therefore invite "outsiders", usually from a People's Army unit stationed outside of town.

Then there is the factory library, with full-time librarian. A new librarian came to fill this post recently and decided to do more publicity work. Among other things, she rigged up a little "sales" cart with dozens of the most interesting books and went out amongst the sewing machines and ironing boards. Forty new regular readers have been the result up till now.

There is also the customary canteen with a daily hot lunch for next to nothing, a store selling food and other items which saves shopping after work for the workers and the youth room with its TV set and dancing facilities (not for use during working hours, of course). And then, for the women who have neither time nor desire to do their own family sewing after sewing other people's clothing all day, there is one woman who takes this work off their hands for a small sum.

Medical treatment is also a big plus. Aside from the general practitioner who visits daily and the four full-time nurses, a dentist comes to the plant five times a week and a doctor for women's ailments visits weekly. She conducts regular examinations of all the women to check on possible cancer symptoms, for example. The obligatory reposing rooms with curtains and comfortable divans are also there.

Mothers working at the plant may leave their children at the neighbouring nursery or kindergarten where they are well-cared for by trained and qualified personnel. If for some reason they are unable to call for them evenings, there are also provisions for some of the children to sleep there during the week.

In the summer, children (older than six) may be sent to the summer camp which the "Progress" employees built for themselves on a lakeside not too far from Berlin. More than 100 children go there every year.

For the adults, too, there is a lakeside holiday home with provisions for thirty guests spending two weeks each. Others receive holiday checks for other parts of the country — the number of these is not yet high enough to fill all demands, however.

But all these features, which are more or less typical of medium and larger factories everywhere in Democratic Germany, have led me somewhat astray from the main character of the factory. Its main purpose, of course, is to produce more, better and cheaper slacks, jackets and suits.

A new campaign has recently gained momentum in the country, again with a rather impressive (or formidable) title. It involves competitions between the work teams (called brigades) of a factory for the title of "Brigade of Socialist Labour". Here is how it works in the "Progress" factory.

All those brigades wishing to take part in the competition agree on certain goals which they set themselves. Up till now only a little more than 200 employees at "Progress" have agreed to participate, but their number is increasing. The goals which they set are at the same time the standards by which they are judged in the competition. They fall into three categories.

The first is "Work". This includes fulfilling the planned amount of production in terms of quantity, turning out good quality as well, being punctual in coming to work, keeping the shop clean and orderly, at least their section of it, and taking good care of their machines.

The second category is training and education, which means largely going to courses for further qualification in their trade or to courses on current events or other subjects run by the trade union, the Socialist Unity Party or the adult schools. Most of the workers starting in the plant are unskilled — first they do hand-sewing jobs, usually, or simple operations with a sewing machine. Perhaps they work on sleeves or linings. The qualification courses teach them to do collars, lapels,

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button-holes, trousers and all the rest. If they can master several operations, their pay envelope gets fatter. If they can sew a complete jacket or pair of trousers, they are classed as "industrial seamstress" (or "sewer") and when they can make a whole suit, they are awarded a certificate as "industrial tailor". Apprentices starting at "Progress" take 1½ and 2 years respectively to learn these trades (along with the other subjects necessary); the older workers, learning in evening courses, take longer and do not qualify completely in most cases; but each new skill makes its mark financially for them. For those who show real talent, there is always the possibility of going to an institute of higher education in the clothing field or in other fields. One girl was sent off to study just a few months ago and a young chap who had left Democratic Germany to become a "refugee" in West Germany and then returned somewhat later, disappointed but much wiser, is now preparing to follow the same course.

So much for qualification. The third category in the competition between the brigades is known as "living" (working, learning, living). This rather strange name refers to all activities not included in the other two groups, such as going together to the theatre, taking part in literary discussion groups, perhaps holding little parties for all members of the brigade to which husbands and boy friends are invited, taking part in voluntary labour jobs to improve Berlin (clearing the last of the ruins) and many other activities.

After certain lengths of time, a jury of factory employees, including workers, clerks, the management and the trade union, check to see which of the pledges decided upon by the brigade have been carried out. The winners are then given money prizes which are divided up among the members of the brigade.

This whole competition is still in the experimental stage — the first decisions on winners are only due in October. One main aim is obviously to achieve more and better production on the one hand, but also to encourage a friendly feeling amongst the workers and to awaken interest in reading good books and going to the theatre — thus helping to get away from the feeling that everything concerned with the factory is drudgery; the factory does belong to its workers, after all.

This feeling that the nationally-owned factory belongs to the workers is enhanced by the fact that six seamstresses are in various Berlin borough councils and one man working there is on a village council. And even more noteworthy, a shift manager, who had been a seamstress herself not so long ago, is actually a Member of Parliament.

The librarian, using her new "library annex on wheels", visits the work benches to win new readers.

And the factory spirit has really changed beyond comparison since the old days before 1945 when it was owned by the Dutch concern — many of whose leaders "Germanised" themselves and gave large contributions to the nazis in order to make sure of war contracts. The women today think of it more and more as "their" factory; there is friendly cooperation between the workers and the management (many of whom were themselves workers not so long ago), although occasionally the workers find it necessary to criticise certain measures fairly severely in the columns of their factory newspaper. But such little storms blow over and both management and production staffs do their best together to see to it that, for the men of the Republic, the pants fit, the buttons stay on, and the suits flatter their wearers on every occasion.

Murdered Londoner Opposed Wehrmacht

We regret to announce the death of Solomon Lever, former Mayor of Hackney, London, who was murdered by bandits on July 20th.

Mr Lever, who was for many years a reader of GERMAN REPORT, spoke out strongly against German re-armament on September 8th 1954 at the Trade Union Congress. Speaking in the name of the London Jewish Baker's Union, one of Britain's smallest unions, only 68 strong, Mr Lever said:

"I want the Germans disarmed because twice in my lifetime we have seen what a menace an armed Germany can be to the world and to humanity in general. We have seen, very much to our cost and to our sorrow, how ruthless and how cruel an armed and powerful Germany can be...

"Now friends, this small Jewish union which I represent, one of the smallest affiliated to Congress, and the only remaining Jewish trade union in the world outside Israel, feels that it owes a duty to 6 million Jewish dead, put to death by these same Germans whom we now propose to rearm. Have we forgotten the many thousands of socialists and trade unionists in the occupied territories which these same Germans tortured and put to death? The least we can do is to remind you of a massacre unequalled in human history, and which happened only ten brief years ago. Have the people who committed these crimes changed? Most of them are still alive, and they hold responsible positions. It is our view that a disarmed and subdued Germany can be an asset to the world. A rearmed and cocky Germany with 'Deutschland ueber alles' as its slogan would not think twice before again exterminating millions of people to gain its ends."

Democratic Germany Beats France

Swimmers of Democratic Germany beat France's national team by 118 points to 83 in Berlin on July 19th. At water polo the team of the German Democratic Republic beat France 8 to 2.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

A ferocious heat wave has been roasting parts of Europe recently, and to escape the furnace-like atmosphere in Berlin I stole myself a few days off work and fled to the Baltic coast. As usual, the sea-side resorts of the German Democratic Republic were packed tight, but it was nice to sit around in the sea breeze on the square yard or two of beach still available.

Holidays with pay for everybody, cheap holiday homes run by the trade unions, and special cheap trips to the sea are a fine institution, but sometime soon far-reaching measures will have to be taken to upen up whole new stretches of the Baltic Coast for holiday-makers. The fact is that the present resorts, which were quite adequate for the mainly middle-class holiday-makers who used to sun themselves here, are today bursting at the seams under the pressure of the millions of factory workers and farm workers who are able, for the first time in their lives, to take a holiday at the sea-side.

Great Change

As it happened, I had not driven through the countryside of Mecklenburg, which lies between Berlin and the sea-coast, for several years, and I was extremely impressed by the enormous change in the general appearance of things. Mecklenburg used to be the most backward part of Germany, with huge Junker estates and miserable tied cottages for the hired help. After the war had swept over the country the little market towns were blasted, and the villages were hard up for live-stock and machinery, even though the land now belonged to the peasants.

Today, the countryside is blossoming. The increase in the number of cows, geese and chickens in the past few years is startling; there is a lot of rebuilding in the market towns; and the shops there are just about as well stocked as the shops in East Berlin (so much for opinion frequently expressed in western papers that East Berlin is a "show window" and that most goods are in short supply elsewhere).

I am no country-man, so I can make no wise remarks on the way the crops are coming (only fair-to-middling, I am told, because of the drought), but one crop impressed me very much. This was the crop of TV aerials in almost every village. I did not stop to count them anywhere, but it seemed to me that in many villages, where a few years ago there was no electricity and nobody had ever seen a film, there was a TV set in at least every second cottage.

Which is a very long way indeed from the semi-serf status of the Mecklenburg peasants up to 1945.

Prose Problems

Since I am an English journalist living and working in Germany, I am constantly brought up against the problems implicit in translating one language into another. Even if the translator knows both of the languages perfectly, and can write passable prose, (this seems to be a rare combination of talents), the job of conveying in English exactly what somebody wrote or said in German is still a difficult job. I mentioned not so long ago the difficulty of finding proper English equivalents for words like "Revanchismus", roughly "revenge-seeking-ism", and I can still vaguely recall that in the late 1920's there was serious friction between Germany and Britain as to whether the German word "Alsbald" in some international agreement meant "immediately" or just "as soon as possible".

But translation has its lighter sides too. I still treasure the memory of the publicity material in French prepared by a clothing firm in Democratic Germany which offered French customers "underclothing for light ladies", and "practical clothing for washable little boys."

Today I offer for your hot-season amusement the title of a dish which I found on a multi-lingual menu in the university town of Greifswald: "Vealsteak of pork with battered peas".

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A colleague back from Geneva tells me of a classical remark at one of the western press conferences which I have not seen printed anywhere. A correspondent asked the official spokesman to clarify a rather delphic passage in a speech made by his foreign minister. The spokesman then said disarmingly: "I will now read you the text of the statement made by our minister once more: this will make it even unclearer."

If the coverage of the Geneva Conference given by this paper has sometimes lacked crystal clarity, please blame the western foreign ministers, and not us.

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In the last issue of GERMAN REPORT we mentioned on page 123 the case of Dr Otto Woehrmann, Presiding Judge of the Upper Provincial Court in Celle, West Germany, one of the many old nazi judges back in office again in West Germany. We are glad to be able to report that following the publicity given to Dr Woehrmann's very murky past he has now been suspended from office. The West German authorities only have to take similar action in about one thousand further cases and the West German courts will not look quite so much like nazi courts as they do today.

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West Berlin has a "Free University", which was founded in 1948 as a break-away from the old Berlin university which is situated in the eastern part of the city. An interesting sidelight on the freedom of this Free University was given in mid-July when Rector Gerhard Schenk forbade his students to sign a petition calling on the West German authorities to take action against nazi judges who had been restored to office, and against nazi concentration camp doctors who are again practising medicine. It should perhaps be emphasised that this petition was not in any way "Communist-inspired". It had been approved by the student society, which is strongly anti-Communist.

Radio Berlin International

News and views from the German Democratic Republic are broadcast daily by Radio Berlin International on the following wavelengths:

30.83 metres = 9730 kcs
41.89 metres = 7160 kcs
49.06 metres = 6115 kcs

The times of the programmes are as follows:

ENGLISH: 18.00, 20.00, 22.00 GMT
FRENCH: 18.30, 20.30, 22.30 GMT
SWEDISH: 17.00, 19.30, 21.30 GMT
DANISH: 17.30, 19.00, 21.00 GMT

Programmes in Arabic are broadcast on wavelength 30.83 metres from 04.00–05.00 GMT and from 13.00–16.00 GMT.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III Berlin W 8, Telephone 22 29 68. Printed in Germany by (204). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.